

Sub

12 APR 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Information Systems Analysis Staff

SUBJECT : Classification/Declassification of
Information

1. At your suggestion, the Office of the Inspector General undertook a review to determine whether Agency officers with classification authority understand classification criteria and are complying with the guidelines established under Executive Order 11652, the NSC Directive of 17 May 1972, and [] The review included discussions with several individuals in each directorate, a check of chrono files in selected offices, and a study of responses to a questionnaire we prepared and forwarded to every operating component in the Agency.

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2. We found no major surprises in our review. If anything, our findings were pretty much as anticipated by you and the IG team in your initial discussions. It is obvious that there has been a significant change in the application of classification levels since the issuance of EO 11652. The order seems to have had the desired effect. It has caused classification officers to scrutinize classification practices that they had taken for granted over the years. These officers appear to be more sensitive to the different classification levels and are using more discretion in making classification decisions. This is reflected in the fact that the numbers of papers at the Administrative-Internal Use Only and Confidential levels have markedly increased and those at higher levels have correspondingly decreased.

3. We did come across some examples of overclassification in our check of chrono files. It is our view, however, that it is not a problem of any serious magnitude. In an attempt to eliminate or reduce such abuses even further, we would suggest that each operating component be directed to designate an officer to review its chrono files

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periodically to spot errors and alert the appropriate official accordingly. This officer would be responsible for monitoring compliance with EO 11652, and he could serve as the focal point for future surveys of this nature.

4. Components in the Directorate of Operations and the Directorate of Management and Services reported that they periodically review the classification level of the pre-classified forms that they use. This is an encouraging sign and a further indication of progress in the classification field, although we do not know the number of such forms that have recently been modified as to classification. However, a small sampling of some of the several thousand pre-classified forms used by the Agency suggests that much remains to be done in this field. We list below some obvious examples of overclassification that we found in our sampling, and we would suggest that your staff issue instructions that all pre-classified forms be reviewed to ensure that they carry a realistic classification.

Form 1822	Request for Payment & Posting Voucher - SECRET
1824	Five Years from Now (how you see yourself) - SECRET
1825	The Story of My Life - SECRET
1830	Report of Test Results (Clerical Skills) - CONFIDENTIAL
1854a	Clerical Skills Qualification Test - Shorthand - SECRET
1854b	Clerical Skills Qualification Test - Typing - SECRET
1942	Instructor Data Record - SECRET
1967	Resignation Report - SECRET

5. which prescribes the procedures for identification of personnel with National Security Classification Authority (NSCA), expired on 1 September 1973. This HN should be re-issued, or the expiration date extended, because these procedures satisfy the requirement to designate NSCA in writing as well as the requirement to maintain lists of titles of positions to which each category of NSCA is delegated.

6. It is our understanding that the number of officers with classification authority should be limited to those who are "absolutely required for efficient administration." The numbers of such officers

reported by area divisions in the Directorate of Operations struck us as being quite high. Further, these components as well as a few in the Directorate of Science and Technology seem to make no distinction between authority to classify and authority to exempt. Their figures reveal that every officer who has classification authority -- be it at the TOP SECRET, SECRET, or CONFIDENTIAL level -- also has exemption authority. This would certainly suggest a need for re-indoctrination.

7. EO 11652 requires the head of each department to "... establish and maintain active training and orientation programs for employees concerned with classified information or material. Such programs shall include, as a minimum, the briefing of new employees and periodic orientation during employment to impress upon each individual his responsibility for exercising vigilance and care in complying with the provisions of this order." The component response to the questionnaire indicates that training for classification officers is virtually non-existent. The best that can be said for training, either introductory or refresher, is that a few components circulate appropriate classification guidelines to responsible officers for reading on an annual basis.

8. Our review of chrono files and other material indicates that the IMPDET stamp is being used indiscriminately. For the most part, classification officers tend to use the stamp as a convenient way of avoiding a conscious decision to determine which, if any, of the various exemption categories properly apply.

9. There appears to be no system for considering the downgrading or declassifying of previously classified material, other than the programs of reviewing materials when they become 30 years old and of responding to mandatory requests for specific documents at least 10 years old. There is some Agency activity to downgrade TOP SECRET collateral documents less than 10 years old, but this is mostly haphazard. [] states that "Agency components, to the extent practicable, shall review documents on a systematic basis and declassify and downgrade them, as warranted." Based on responses to the questionnaire, we feel that this is an area that calls for both training and an ordered plan for downgrading and declassification.

10. We agreed that the questionnaire and this review would not deal with the classification of substantive intelligence or cable traffic. We were, therefore, left with a review of what can be characterized essentially as administrative material and with no appreciation of whether the large volume of other classified Agency material is being appropriately classified. The classification of substantive intelligence, which is by nature derivative, would not very often lend itself to downgrading. Cable traffic, on the other hand, would seem to be susceptible to some downgrading, since we recall your mentioning that the number of cables classified at the SECRET level dropped from 95% to 85% after one of your training programs. Further such programs would seem to be in order, and you may also wish to consider whether it would be feasible to revise the questionnaire to solicit a reasonably accurate picture of the size and level of all Agency classified material.

11. All in all, we believe that noticeable progress has been made in the way the Agency has responded to EO 11652. However, given the nature of the Agency's business, the tendency to over-classify will remain with us for some time. This problem, as well as others, could be corrected by a periodic training program prepared and conducted by your staff. The program should cover all aspects of classification and be designed for current and future classification officers. It should precisely define the distinctions between the different classification levels as well as the different exemption categories, the proper use of the Warning Notice and the IMPDET stamp, downgrading and declassifying, and other applicable problems.



12. The most constructive response by far that we received to the questionnaire came from the Chief, Information Services Group, Directorate of Operations. I would think that he could be very helpful to you in devising a suitable training program for the Agency. I am sending along his comments together with the other responses we received, since your staff will be conducting future reviews of this type and they should prove useful.

Att: 9/1
Distribution:
Orig. and 1 - Addressee

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Donald F. Chamberlain
Inspector General

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